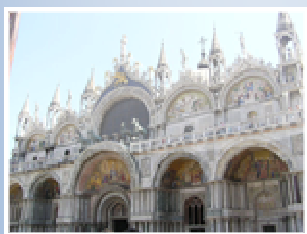


VENICE

Venice (Italian: **Venezia**) is a city in northern **Italy**, the capital of the region Veneto. Together with **Padua**, the city is included in the Padua-Venice Metropolitan Area. The city historically was an independent nation. Venice has been known as the "La Dominante", "Serenissima", "Queen of the Adriatic", "City of Water", "City of Bridges", and "The City of Light". It is often cited as one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

The city stretches across 18 small islands in the marshy Venetian Lagoon along the Adriatic Sea. The saltwater lagoon stretches along the shoreline between the mouths of the Po (south) and the Piave (north) Rivers. The **Venetian Republic** was a major maritime power during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and a staging area for the Crusades and the Battle of Lepanto, as well as a very important center of commerce (especially silk, grain and spice trade) and art in the 13th century up to the end of the 17th century.



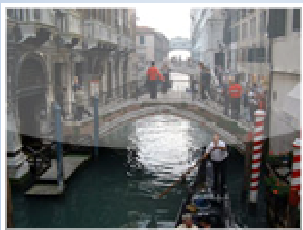
Piazza San Marco: (often known in English as St Mark's Square), is the principal square of Venice. A remark often attributed to Napoleon (but perhaps more correctly to Alfred de Musset) calls the Piazza San Marco "The drawing room of Europe". It is one of the few great urban spaces in a Europe where human voices prevail over the sounds of motorized traffic, which is confined to Venice's waterways. It is the only urban space called a piazza in

Venice; the others, regardless of size, are called campi. As the central landmark and gathering place for Venice, **Piazza San Marco** is extremely popular with tourists, photographers, and Venetian pigeons.

Saint Mark's Basilica (Italian: Basilica di San Marco a Venezia), the cathedral of Venice, is the most famous of the city's churches and one of the best known examples of Byzantine architecture. It lies on St Mark's Square (in the San Marco sestiere or district) adjacent and connected to the Doge's Palace. Originally it was the "chapel" of the Venetian rulers, and not the city's cathedral. Since 1807 it has been the seat of the Patriarch of Venice, archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Venice.

The Grand Canal: forms one of the major water-traffic corridors in the city. Public transport is provided by water buses and private water taxis, but many tourists visit it by gondola. At one end the canal leads into the lagoon near Santa Lucia railway station and the other end leads into Saint Mark Basin. The **Grand Canal** banks are lined with more than 170 beautiful buildings, most of which date to 13th/18th century and demonstrate the welfare and art created by the Republic of **Venice**. The noble venetian families faced huge expenses to show off their richness in suitable "Palazzi".

The Doge's Palace: is a gothic palace in Venice. In Italian it is called the **Palazzo Ducale di Venezia**. The palace was the residence of the Doge of Venice. Its two most visible facades look towards the **Venetian Lagoon** and **St Mark's Square**, or rather the Piazzetta. The current palace was largely constructed from 1309 to 1424. Giovanni and Bartolomeo Bon created the Porta della Carta in 1442, a monumental late-gothic gate on the Piazzetta side of the palace. This gate leads to a central courtyard. As well as being the ducal residence, the palace housed political institutions of the Republic of Venice until the Napoleonic occupation of the city. **Venice** was ruled by an aristocratic elite, but there was a facility for citizens to submit written complaints at what was known as the Bussola chamber.



The Bridge of Sighs: (Italian: Ponte dei Sospiri). The enclosed bridge is made of white limestone and has windows with stone bars. It passes over the Rio di Palazzo and connects the old prisons to the interrogation rooms in the Doge's Palace. It was designed by Antoni Contino (whose uncle Antonio da Ponte had designed the Rialto Bridge), and built in 1602. A local legend says that lovers will be assured eternal love if they kiss on a gondola at sunset

under the bridge.

The Rialto Bridge: (Italian: Ponte di Rialto) is one of the four bridges spanning the Grand Canal in Venice. It is the oldest bridge across the canal and probably the most famous in the city.

The Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute: commonly known simply as the Salute, is a famous church in Venice, placed scenically at a narrow finger of land which lies between the Grand Canal and the Bacino di San Marco on the lagoon. While it has the status of a minor basilica, its decorative and distinctive profile and location make it among the most photographed churches in Italy.

St Mark's Campanile: (Campanile di San Marco in Italian) is the bell tower of St Mark's Basilica, located in the square (piazza) of the same name. It is one of the most recognizable symbols of the city. The tower is 98.6 meters tall, and stands alone in a corner of St Mark's Square, near the front of the basilica. It has a simple form, the bulk of which is a plain brick square shaft, 12 meters a side and 50 meters tall, above which is the arched belfry, housing five bells.

USEFUL INFORMATION

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